PERIODICO EN ESPAÑOL ADENTRO

CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM ★ LUCHA POR EL COMUNISMO ★ PLP

THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

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FROM ALL THE RIVERS TO ALL THE SEAS

COMMUNISM WILL SET US FREE



Healthcare in Gaza is in ruins, Israel prioritizes vaccines for its soldiers, that's capitalist genocide. To free Palestine, fight for communism!

New York City, Sept 2–Thousands of protesters swarmed Union Square in NYC to protest the continuing genocide and slaughter of Palestinian families in Gaza, now spreading to the West Bank. With anger at the bosses' continued bloodbath in Palestine, Progressive Labor Party (PLP) comrades quickly distributed all 250 CHALLENGES we had. Protesters made fists as one comrade introduced a copy of CHALLENGE: "Revolutionary communist paper, smash imperialism everywhere, fight for communism!" That's the only way to put a permanent end to this racist genocide and build a world for workers!

Workers open to communist politics

A young man from New Jersey said he wanted to contact us. He added that Hamas were heroes, fighting for Palestinians. Our comrade responded, "No. Hamas is a group allied with Iran, a country allied with China and Russia, locked into imperialist rivalry with the U.S. What we need is a unified, international working class that fights to destroy all imperialists!" A young Korean-American woman, member of the New York Writers Guild, told us about her communist grandparents who were killed in Korea. She supports an organization that fights U.S. imperialism and military bases in South Korea. "I'm an internationalist, like you," she said.

Several comrades met friends in organizations they belong to and marched with them. As we circulated, we said hello to a group of Palestinian women who raised their fists as we gave them CHALLENGES. A PLP'er said, "Well, I can't use a bad word." "Go ahead," they responded, "We use it all the time." "OK. This f... ing system's gotta go!"

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JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION



OUR FIGHT

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.
While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

Inter-imperialist rivalry drives Venezuela election farce

In a Venezuelan election fiasco driven by the world's biggest imperialists, the U.S.-backed challenger to the country's fake-leftist leadership has fled the country for political asylum in Spain (Aljazeera, 9/8). After President Nicholas Maduro declared himself the winner, the right-wing camp behind candidate Edmundo Gonzalez claimed the election had been rigged. Gonzales went into hiding to escape arrest. The U.S. government, hell-bent on regime change in Venezuela, called out the alleged fraud, slapped sanctions on Maduro's allies, and organized 28 countries to refuse to recognize the results.

Gonzalez is just a stand-in for the pro-U.S. Maria Machado, who was banned from holding office. Their "Unitary Coalition" calls for harsh attacks against the working class: privatization of industry, massive cutbacks in social services. The Machado camp has gone so far as to advocate for tougher U.S. sanctions against their country, hoping that even more poverty in Venezuela will hurt Maduro and open the door to U.S. control (El Pais, 10/1/23).

Maduro is using fascist terror to crack down on protestors, union officials, and any organization that steps out of line. Twenty-four people have been killed and more than 2,400 arrested (Human Rights Watch, 9/4). But don't be fooled by the howls of outrage by the likes of Joe Biden. The U.S. bosses have no problem collaborating with less-than-democratic rulers, from Saudi Arabia to Haiti, as long as they serve U.S. imperialism and its profits. The Central Intelligence Agency has been used to subvert and overthrow elected leaders in Indonesia, Chile, Guatemala, and the Congo, while orchestrating the slaughter of communists and reformists alike.

Workers have no stake in the rulers' electoral farces. Under capitalism, elections are used to conceal the capitalists' dictatorship under the veil of liberal democracy. In reality, all elections are rigged for the bosses, whether or not they count all the votes—including the contest between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump (see back page). The meltdown in Venezuela is another flashpoint in the rivalry between the U.S. and arch-rivals China and Russia as they head toward World War Three. As the international crisis of capitalism intensifies, inter-imperialist rivalry is driving instability worldwide. We can't predict the winner of this dogfight, but one thing is sure in Venezuela. Regardless of which set of bosses prevail, workers will lose.

False promises and poverty

Despite his grand promises, Venezuela's previous president, Hugo Chavez, never brought the working class to power with his "Bolivarian Revolution." Instead, the new government and its capitalist backers seized control of the country's vast oil reserves and bought off workers with a handful of anti-poverty social programs. Despite bitter complaints by U.S. capitalists, Chavez also kept investments flowing from outside capital, including the U.S., and continued selling oil to U.S. firms (Washington Post, 1/29/19).

Instead of building communism, a dictatorship of the working class, Chavez consolidated a petrostate that relied on the global oil exchange, which accounted for nearly two thirds of state revenue (Reuters, 12/5/22). Not long after Maduro succeeded Chavez in 2013, global oil prices plummeted. This triggered a long and severe recession that U.S. sanctions made worse. It soon became obvious that Venezuela produced almost nothing of its own. Even today, Venezuela imports 60 percent of its food supply, much of it from the U.S. (USDA, 10/3/22).

With loyal backing from Russia and China, Maduro has presided over a catastrophic collapse of the Venezuelan economy. Between 2014 and 2021, the country's GDP fell by 75 percent while inflation has risen as high as 130,000 percent (Council of Foreign Relations, 7/31). The result is unspeakable misery for the working class. More than 90 percent of the population live in poverty. There are deadly shortages of essentials, and millions suffer from malnutrition. Children die of starvation while their families scavenge in dumpsters for food (Bread for the World, 2/8/19). Soaring prices have forced workers to the black market to survive. Three days of work buys just two pounds of rice, for which workers must stand in line all day. Hospitals have less than 5 percent of the medications they need (Reuters, 10/10/22).



As a result, 7.7 million people, or one quarter of Venezuela's population, have made the heartbreaking decision to flee their country and migrate to Peru or Chile or Colombia, where they are greeted by racist discrimination (aljazeera.com, 8/14/19). More than half a million have risked their lives to make their way to the U.S. (BBC, 8/5), where they are welcomed by violent border guards and slandered by gutter racists like Trump.

Imperialists vie for control

Instead of relying on the might and ingenuity of workers to build a decent society, Chavez and then Maduro turned to Russia and China, who were eager to penetrate the U.S. strategic "backyard." Russia's military alliances with Cuba, Nicaragua, and Venezuela involve training and weapon sales (Institute for National Strategic Studies, 12/2022). China has sunk $60 billion in the Venezuelan economy and is the largest importer of Venezuelan oil. These profit-seeking deals have done nothing to alleviate the suffering of the impoverished masses. But they have won Maduro Chinese backing for his dubious election victory (VOA, 8/3).

The betrayal of workers by the fake left in Venezuela stands in sharp contrast to the historic advance made by revolutionary communists in the Soviet Union in the early 20th century. They built an economy of and for the working class that could stand on its own feet and meet workers' needs. Soviet leaders were so successful that the USSR proved immune to the plague of the Great Depression, which devastated capitalist countries in the 1930s. (See PLP.org for how the Soviet revolution was reversed).

Don't vote, revolt!

There are no shortcuts to an egalitarian world. The Bolivarian "Revolution" was doomed from the start because it failed to organize workers to smash capitalism and to build communism. Like the rest of the "Pink Tide" across Latin America, it won only limited and short-term reforms while replacing the old group of bosses with a new one.

With the collapse of the old liberal world order, as China and Russia exploit the decline of U.S. imperialism, the international working class is caught in the middle. If we line up behind one candidate or another, or one imperialist superpower or the other, we'll be signing our own death warrants. We must reject capitalist misleaders like Nicolas Maduro, Mexico's Claudia Sheinbaum, Brazil's Lula da Silva, or Top Cop Kamala Harris in the U.S. They will lead our class into the hell of nationalism, racism, and imperialist war. They have no choice in the matter; their profit system has decayed to the point where it can't survive without war and fascism.

Progressive Labor Party is building the only force that can solve the crisis of capitalism: an international communist movement. We must begin this work by banding together, building solidarity with migrants, and organizing multiracial fightback wherever we are. We must attack rotten capitalist ideas on campus, on the job, in the military. These day-to-day reform struggles will build workers' confidence in our class's ability to create a world with enough housing, jobs, healthcare, and education for all. But we can't get there by voting. The bosses won't let us vote away their money and power. We must destroy capitalism, root and branch—with communist revolution. Join us!

Chicago

Organizing against racist Riot Fest

CHICAGO, September 11—In yet another example of the anti-working-class nature of the bosses' state, the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the permit today for the massive rock concert Riot Fest to return to Douglass Park this month. Riot Fest is a for-profit event that has raked in handsome profits for years by exploiting public parks that supposedly exist for working-class recreation.

Given Douglass Park's location in between Black and Latin neighborhoods, cutting off access to much-needed green spaces and sports programs is a despicable racist attack. Local residents and organizers have long suffered and documented the damage done to the park as tens of thousands of concert goers trample through during the three-day fest. Two nearby hospitals serving lower-income workers are confronted with loud music and snarled traffic despite being designated as official "quiet zones."

During the public comment period of the board meeting, several workers spoke out against Riot Fest, including a member of the communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP). It's inspiring to see grassroots organizing efforts continue to oppose racist Riot Fest. However, we can never expect the government bodies under capitalism to fundamentally serve our interests. They will always exist to enforce the will of the bosses and their profit system, from the U.S. presidency all the way down to local park district boards.

To experience a government and society that is truly reflective of the needs of the international working class, we need a society that is RUN by the international working class. We need to reject all these gross opportunistic politicians in favor of mass working-class power, won by international communist revolution and PLP!

I believe in working-class power over those who would exploit public space and other people for their own gain, and again, I believe that we will win.

Liberal bosses lay out the welcome mat for exploiters

For those of us living near Douglass Park who have been involved in the efforts to get Riot Fest out, we were beyond excited to hear in June that the concert organizers had decided to relocate the fest to a stadium in the southwest suburbs. The owner of Riot Fest went on record painting themselves as the victim, calling out the park district board and saying they were left with "no choice" but to leave (Block Club Chicago, 6/12).

Unsurprisingly however, Riot Fest still had some friends in high places who were willing to mend the fence, not least so-called progressive Mayor Brandon Johnson who held meetings with the concert founder (CBS News, 8/14). So hardly two months after celebrating what we thought was a decent reform win for workers in the area, we learned that Riot Fest was again coming to Douglass Park, "back by popular demand."

We tried to bounce back even with short notice to mobilize speakers and a press conference for today's park board meeting, but the approval already appeared to be a done deal. Opportunistic Alderwoman Monique Scott organized her own crew of vocal pro-Riot Fest supporters, who all praised the alleged economic growth and shamelessly kept referring to the concert organizers as "family." Although she claims that she's standing up for the Black workers and youth in her neighborhood, by fully embracing profit-hungry developers she's leading the efforts to push through racist gentrification and displacement on the west side of the city.

Even though the approval for Riot Fest was essentially a done deal, the PLP member spoke in their statement about the workers near Douglass Park not giving up:

I believe in working-class power over those who would exploit public space and other people for their own gain, and again, I believe that we will win. The demands for transparency from Mayor Johnson and this board are clear from hundreds of supporters who want Riot Fest out, and who are ready to fight for a more equitable city. We await your reply. And we're not going anywhere.

Keep fighting Riot Fest and racist capitalism

Facing another year of Riot Fest, the workers near Douglass Park are not giving up. We're going to continue our efforts of documenting the damage done to the park, registering complaints, and building relationships with our neighbors and co-workers. As PLP members connected to this fight, we need to expose the contradictions of the system and the pitfalls of relying on any bosses to solve the problems that our class faces.

Although a worker-run society may seem far off, the seeds of a world beyond capitalism are already taking root. Through collective action we are reminded that it's the masses that make history, and not relying on politicians and voting which just pulls the wool over our eyes. To fight against Riot Fest is to fight against racist capitalism!

NYC protest vs genocide

'Whole system's gotta go'



At protest against genocide in Gaza many open to communist ideas

Continued from page 1

Genocidal public health crisis

Later that day there was a fundraiser to send medics and medical supplies to Gaza. Protesters are enraged at the total destruction of hospitals and healthcare in Gaza. The health of Gazans continues to be at severe risk. In addition to the near 41,000 traumatic deaths to date, many of the nearly 94,000 wounded will succumb to wound infections and other complications for lack of medical care. Lack of food and clean water has led to a profusion of infectious diseases, such as hepatitis A and chicken pox, as well as widespread malnutrition and thirst.

Most recently, polio virus has been found in sewage and one baby has been paralyzed. The Israelis are terrified it could spread beyond Gaza and so are allowing very limited half day ceasefires to vaccinate children. This effort is bound to be incomplete, although Israel is making sure its soldiers get the vaccine. Cholera is very likely to emerge. Medical facilities continue to be attacked and at least 500 health care workers have been killed and over 300 arrested and tortured.

Leading the way to smashing capitalism

There are huge opportunities to sharpen communist consciousness at these large protests, on college campuses and elsewhere. PLP must be present! A gated university like Columbia is closed to anyone who doesn't have a Columbia ID. Students face a list of restrictions this semester: no encampments, no protests on campus, no information to be circulated except about "educational" matters. The fight will continue! No war except class war! Fight for communism!

Colombia

Fighting racism is key to smashing capitalism

This article is a reprint of a presentation a comrade in Colombia made at a red virtual school alongside comrades in Mexico.

Racism historically developed from colonialism and the emergence and development of capitalism. In Europe, this "development" that allowed the "primitive accumulation of capital" was based on the exploitation of the slave labor of Africans, Asians, indigenous peoples and other "colored peoples," justifying this method with the theory of superior and inferior races. In North America, it emerged in the form of a multiracial labor force with perks for whites and genocide for indigenous people. This is how anti-Black racism emerged, which today divides workers throughout the world and is the basis of capitalist superprofits and the absolute superexploitation of Black communities.

The Europeans brought indigenous people from the Americas to be displayed as "animals" in captivity, reinforcing the ideal of an inferior race to justify genocide in the Americas. Already in the industrial era, capitalists used children in factories, demonstrating the classist and merciless character that currently prevails in all areas of the planet where workers and the oppressed make up a large percentage of soldiers in the bosses' armed forces, which they are forced to enlist in due to the lack of employment opportunities. For this reason, these workers are the key to the success of the revolution in all countries where racism lies as a source of power and profit for the bosses. It is also their Achilles' heel, since every super-exploited worker is a potential revolutionary leader for the working class. Every unemployed youth mistreated by police brutality is a potential recruit for the class war for workers' power. This is the educational work that Progressive Labor Party organizers must carry out daily together with our readers, friends and family in building a base for revolution.

Racism, along with sexism and nationalism, is used to divide our class, creating armies as cannon fodder for their imperialist genocides and impoverishing the workers of countries with low levels of economic development, such as Ecuador, Peru, Haiti, Bolivia, Colombia, etc., where 90 percent of the inhabitants are Afro and indigenous, 85 percent are in poverty, and 42 percent in absolute misery.

Historically, these workers have led hundreds of militant class struggles such as strikes, occupations, labor actions, and dozens of rebellions, uprisings, stoppages and social uprisings. The capitalists use force and deceit to pacify the workers, whether by lying about the war against poverty, with miserable subsidies or terrible jobs as janitors, messengers, builders, artisanal miners, etc. Capitalists and the media make workers believe that they can gain more influence by electing mobster politicians, corrupt police officers or Black mayors.

Today, capitalism allocates very few resources and many lies to appease the anger of workers with minimal reforms, such as those currently being debated in the Colombian parliament, while unemployment for Black women has increased twice as much as that of whites, while all salaries have decreased.

In Colombia and around the world, Black workers are the key to the class struggle, but if we are not with them to win them over to communism, their anger will turn into fascism/liberalism or they will be meekly led to the ballot boxes. We have to raise communist consciousness in factories, universities, communities and barracks. We cannot win over the most advanced workers without being involved in their struggles. If we do not fight racism, the working class fights with its hands tied behind its back.

The revolutionary struggle needs a united working class. This is why communists see anti-racist unity as the key to the fight against the bosses who are the creators and benefit from wage slavery. This must be a massive and violent struggle since segregation is a violent attack against the entire working class. Blacks, Latins, mestizos, Asians, whites and indigenous people must unite massively to attack racism as the enemy of the entire proletariat, since we have the same chains of slavery and many sufferings due to capitalist oppression. We must unite as a revolutionary class under the political line of the PLP to destroy the current warlike, mafia-like and fascist system.

Letter Peru

The revolution is worldwide!

A recent trip to Perú has resulted in the distribution of upwards of 20 copies of Challenge and multiple wide-ranging discussions about the state of the world, capitalism, and the possibility of a communist future. I found many workers here open to discussing how capitalism has failed them, and worked to lend a more global perspective to what here often seems like simply a dead-end world without hope.

Rekindling an old friendship has resulted in the possibility of a new Challenge network, and discussions with family and neighbors about the genocide in Gaza has opened channels of communication about the causes of these wars, corruption, racist exploitation, and how communism could actually solve these problems.

In honor of the first days of school, I was honored to participate in a fundraiser for a "Tent School" in Gaza (Carpa Escolar), organized by an Afro-Peruvian Jazz Sextet. A Peruvian Palestinian historian gave a very informative talk about the history of Palestine and current situation. In addition to a live audience, there were upwards of 150 people from all over the world tuning in virtually, and together we raised $5000, which is enough to keep this tent school running (including at least a meal a day) for a month, which of course demonstrates our monumental task ahead. In addition to distributing some newspapers at the event, in the Q&A I was able to bring international greetings and raise sharper issues of imperialism, capitalism, and class struggle (including comparisons with Dominican Republic/Haiti) and uniting the generations to learn from history to change this whole damned system.

Here there is surprising knowledge and interest in the US election, which I used as a jumping-off point to show that the true lever of change and promise exists outside the electoral system, in the (international) class struggle. For most workers I talked to, this is a breath of fresh air!

I also participated—too briefly!—in a demonstration condemning ex-president Alberto Fujimori, who died at the end of my trip. Workers gathered in Plaza San Martin in the center of Lima to denounce his racist, genocidal regime that was responsible for tens of thousands of workers' deaths and an anti-communist killing spree in the 1990s. In spite of his murderous rule and long imprisonment for crimes against humanity, his funeral was still celebrated as a major event by sections of the ruling class. Even some workers lament how "the economy was better" when he was president because life has devolved here over the years (Perú had the highest per capita Covid death rate in the world).

Like the US, Perú has its own history of communism and anti-communism that we must study to understand how we can build our international movement here, like all over the world. But this trip is yet another reminder that the revolution and the fight for communism is worldwide.

One self-criticism: next trip, bring more newspapers! (I ran out.)



Top photo: Fascist Fujimori imprisoned and recently dead but capitalism continues. The whole damn system has to go. Bottom photo: (Spanish translation) Capitalism doesn't govern it enslaves. Down with neoliberalism! For a worldwide workers' government. This sign demonstrates many workers in Peru open to communism.



John Brown & Harriet Tubman

Hidden history of multiracial unity

The following is a reprint of an article originally published.It can be used in history and other humanities classes. This model of multiracial unity is a good foundation to set the tone for the school year.

This coming October 17 marks the 165th anniversary of the raid on Harpers Ferry. It was a revolutionary revolt showing the need for militant, antiracist, multiracial, revolutionary struggle! The fight against racist terror continues with the rebellions sparked by police murders this summer. As workers recognize the power of unity, the cops crack down harder on protests.

The southern enslaving class was terrified by the Harpers Ferry raiders' militant, multiracial unity, a real-life rebuke of their racist stereotyping. One of the raiders' five Black freedom fighters, Osborne Anderson, described the atmosphere before-hand:

"I have been permitted to realize to its furthest, fullest extent, the moral, mental, physical, social harmony of an Anti-Slavery family, carrying out to the letter the principle of the Anti-slavery cause. In John Brown's house, and in John Brown's presence, men from widely different parts of the continent met and united into one company, wherein no hateful prejudice dared intrude its ugly self — no ghost of a distinction found space to enter."

From childhood, Brown vowed to fight slavery

This trust among white and Black fighters did not happen overnight. John Brown's father was a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Ohio. At 12, Brown met a fugitive enslaved boy and saw the suffering slavery had inflicted on him, influencing Brown forever. He believed Black and white workers were completely equal. He put this knowledge into action daily.

As an adult, Brown moved his family to a farm in North Elba, N.Y. near a Black community of former enslaved workers. Black sisters and brothers were regularly invited to the house for dinner with Brown's family. He addressed them as "Mr." or "Mrs.," sharply contrasting with the era's racist mores (true even among many slavery opponents).

Preparing for the raid, Brown turned to both Black and white abolitionists. In April 1858, while gathering money, arms and volunteers in Canada, he visited Harriet Tubman. She was well-known to the Black fugitive slave community there, having personally guided many to freedom. Tubman supported his plans, urging him to set July 4, 1858, for the raid and promising to bring volunteers. They agreed to communicate through their mutual friend Frederick Douglass, reaching out to Black abolitionists and former enslaved workers.

Tubman single-handedly freed 300 enslaved workers

Tubman's own experiences made her and Brown allies. Born around 1820 to enslaved parents on a Maryland plantation, Tubman performed house and field work, was subjected to physical abuse and tearfully saw many of her nine siblings sold away from the family. In her teens, Tubman suffered a broken skull from brutal plantation life. Her "owner" tried selling her as "damaged goods." Instead she fled, walking for several weeks, mostly at night, the 90 miles to Philadelphia via the Underground Railroad. She returned shortly afterwards, guiding her family out of slavery to Canada. And that was just the beginning.

Over the following 11 years, with a bounty on her head, Tubman made approximately 13 trips south and guided an estimated 300 enslaved workers to freedom in Canada. This resolute, daring revolutionary declared, "I never ran my train off the tracks and I never lost a passenger."Tubman warmly endorsed Brown's armed struggles in Kansas against the proslavery gangs. Brown, in turn, knew Tubman's courage, militancy, and knowledge of the land and Underground Railroad network, and felt Tubman would be invaluable in executing their plans to free the enslaved by any means necessary. He always addressed her as "General Tubman." Both believed in direct action and armed violence to end slavery.

Tubman became ill and could not bring her forces to Harpers Ferry, but her work inspired the rest of the raiders. Tubman's example, like that of Osborne Anderson and the other Black raiders, discredited the




Multiracial unity and a brutal Civil War smashed slavery. Multiracial unity and communist revolution necessary to smash capitalism

image of Black people as passive victims, terrifying the southern enslavers and politicians, and inspired the abolitionist movement.

Black rebels petrified slave-owners

To those today who say workers won't fight oppression, the stubborn facts of history show struggle is universal. The slave-owners, although talking of "docile" Black workers, knew this well. They were petrified of potential Black rebels and of "outside agitators." They patrolled all night with dogs and guns to intimidate their enslaved workers and to keep Yankees and abolitionist literature away from them.

Today the "outside agitators" are Progressive Labor Party (PLP) communists, fighting to abolish racist capitalism. The bosses assure us that the impoverished working class is too ground down, too alienated to fight back collectively, saying workers hate communism. Yet they organize cops, plant security, the Minutemen, Black nationalists and sellout union "leaders" to try to keep communists out, and instantly fire them when they're discovered in a factory. Why are they afraid if the working class is supposed to be so passive?

Today, uniting to fight the mutual class enemy is one of the main ways people of different backgrounds are able to overcome the "natural" segregation capitalist society promotes. Brown and Tubman demonstrated that racist and nationalist ideas cannot be overcome primarily inside one's head. It requires material change in the way one lives. Among the Black and militant white abolitionists, multiracial unity developed over years of working together, getting to know each other while struggling over their differences.

Today, U.S. capitalism has created its own contradiction. Workers still often live in neighborhoods separated by "race" but many are integrated within their workplaces and schools. The bosses try to divide us there as well, with racist job classifications and different types of bourgeois culture to keep workers apart (e.g., soul "versus" country music). Nevertheless, workers rub shoulders every day. Class-conscious workers in PLP must develop these acquaintances into friendships and unbreakable bonds in struggle.

Class struggle trumps racism

As in Tubman and Brown's time, racism permeates society. But rebellions and strikes reveal multiracial unity and struggle against the bosses. At the Smithfield Ham Factory in Tarheel, NC, for example, a 15-year unionization fight witnessed intense intimidation from the bosses to scare workers from signing union cards. But by organizing support from grocery workers from far and wide, Smithfield workers felt part of a larger community. When the bosses got immigration agents to raid the plant, targeting Latin workers for deportation, the workers saw through this divisive trick and, in November 2006, 500 marched out in a two-day strike protesting this raid, forcing the company to rehire all the fired immigrant workers!

In 2008 in the Bronx, NY, the Stella D'Oro workers went on strike for 11 months. These immigrant workers from across the world, men and women, overcame differences and stuck together. Not one worker crossed the picket line! PLP had organized friends, comrades, teachers and students onto the picket lines, bringing solidarity and communist leadership. PLP members steadfastly stood in solidarity with the strikers via donations, rallies and marches, and supported their fight against plant closure. The fight against police brutality is a protracted class war still being waged today. It is the same war left unfinished by Tubman and Brown. This summer PLP joined the militant antiracist fightback against the kkkops, who in less than a year's time, stole the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Jacob Blake, and countless others. The multiracial character of these protests are glimmers of the revolutionary potential of the working class.

John Brown's raid and Harriet Tubman's courage in freeing 300 slaves along the Underground Railroad teach us many lessons that hold valuable to antiracists. First, militancy was foremost in their thinking. Tubman declared she would never return to being a slave, that she would rather die fighting. Brown, after fighting in Kansas, realized that only bloodshed could end slavery. Many workers agreed with them, especially after the 1857 Dred Scott decision legalizing slavery nationwide.

The second is that multiracial unity is essential in any fight. Black workers escaping from enslavement received needed help from white abolitionists to reach the North. Thousands of workers, Black and white, helped escaping slaves along their journeys and defended them when attacked by slave-catchers. These workers attended public meetings, donated money, passed word to their friends and helped harbor fugitive slaves.

PLP does similar things today. We discuss political struggles and the vital need for multiracial unity against the racist system with friends, coworkers and neighbors. We urge them to join in militant antiracist demonstrations, build a multiracial base with fellow workers or donate to CHALLENGE. Every time someone we know does one of these simple acts, they're making a political commitment in the fight against racism, capitalism and imperialism, just as thousands of anti-slavery porters did against slavery — taking small steps to serve and defend those who had escaped slavery as well as those who fought it directly.

Join PLP

We invite all workers, soldiers and students who participate in these struggles to join Progressive Labor Party.

Today's supporters of antiracist struggle understand — just as did the thousands backing Brown and Tubman 165 years ago — that revolutionaries like the raiders then and PLP now are the honest, reliable leaders in struggle. When direct action is required, they know to whom to turn. CHALLENGE constantly reports workers being won to militancy and multiracial unity in struggles against the racist bosses, hailing those joining our ranks. Step by step, the communist movement will grow and lead the working class to revolution and a new world based on members of our class mutually meeting each other's needs, without racist bosses and their profit system.

LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.



Why joining PLP was like opening a third eye for me

This was my first summer project since joining Progressive Labor Party (PLP) and it was a life-changing experience, to say the least. I still remember how I felt when I came to my first summer project three years ago and left feeling inspired to get more involved. Still, I experienced what felt like a mental breakdown when I began to grasp how complex and immense capitalism is. I remember asking myself "How is it possible that everything I've known my entire life was a lie?" There was no American dream and growing up in poverty with immigrant parents, it was something I realized from a young age but wasn't able to grasp fully.

I knew the way I was living wasn't fair but back then I felt as though it was just the way life is and I couldn't do anything about it.

I had not realized that my family and everyone around me were living this way because of capitalism. I had not made that connection and I was not able to find the words to describe what I was feeling until I was exposed to PLP and communism. This past summer project I developed an understanding of international working class consciousness and so much more. Every single encounter that I had with workers left me shocked when I realized how aware workers are of this exploitative government. From the nurses striking at the University of Illinois Hospital for fair contracts, students who came to march at the DNC in solidarity with Palestinian lives, to transit workers on the Chicago train. Almost every single worker in Chicago shared the same sentiment and understood that we could never survive under capitalism, and there won't be justice in society unless it was ruled by the working class.

Over the past few years, it's been like a light bulb turning on in my head one by one by each comrade who has taught me more about communism and the fight for the international working class. Even though I still struggle with feeling as though I can't fully grasp the ideas of communism, I get a sense of comfort from other comrades who share those feelings with me. I know what the comrades in the Party have been fighting for and continue to fight for.

My best advice to those who feel powerless and and aren't sure about how to fight back against capitalism is to join Progressive Labor Party. You are not alone in your fight for a better future for the working class.

Spark of hope in a love fest of union hacks & pols

Tens of thousands of workers marched in today's Labor Day parade organized by the New York City Central Labor Council. If you thought that this was a massive display of union solidarity and strength fighting against the evils of the capitalist system, you would be sadly mistaken. In the midst of the annual love fest between the labor bureaucracy and New York's Democratic Party hacks however, there were sparks of hope.

Progressive Labor Party members (PL'ers) participated with groups of workers who were demanding that their unions fight the genocide in Gaza and with retirees who were fighting the gang up by city bosses and the leaders of the Municipal Labor Committee against 250,000 retired city workers. They were trying to force retirees from their current traditional Medicare and city paid supplemental coverage into an inferior Medicare (dis)Advantage health plan.

PL'ers bought our message that the capitalist system is the cause of all of the problems workers face from Palestine to New York City. We say that the band-aid solutions to the cancer of capitalism is not the solution. We know that only communist revolution will end the misery faced by workers world-wide. To win workers like those who marched today we have to immerse ourselves in every struggle workers face and participate with them in organizations controlled by our ruling class enemies.

Raise a glass for fighting the bosses

Last weekend I participated in a wine tasting fundraiser to cover expenses from this year's Progressive Labor Party (PLP) summer project. It was organized at a comrades' home where there was an abundance of yummy food and various spreads of desserts and dishes. The event was very well attended and we played a fun game where we were given a list of wines which were concealed in burlap sacks and we had to guess which bottle was which based on the description provided on the wine list. I gave a short report and speech urging folks to donate. I started off by summing up the successes of the summer projects and the impact the Party made at both the Democratic and Republican national conventions. I contrasted their convention with what the PLP accomplished and what the working class can achieve— versus the total circus that was the convention and the ruler's disastrous leadership—which we all witnessed in the debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. Here is what I said.

Neither the Democrats or the Republicans care about working-class people. They both had cops at their conventions to keep angry working-class people out. The only people who will fight for us are us— the working class. We are the ones who will save us!

Earlier this week was the presidential debate. If you watched the debate that night, you definitely heard all the racist, sexist things coming out of Trump's mouth. Apparently, the Haitian community in Springfield, Ohio are eating cats and dogs. Also did you hear that women will "abort" their children after they are born if Roe V. Wade is reinstated

During the debate, he also called Kamala a communist and a Marxist which is such a joke and has said that she hated Israel. Trump has made her look better than she actually is, and we know that she's an even bigger threat to the working class. Yes, the MAGA Republicans are like racist nazis but they aren't as dangerous as Harris and the liberal bosses which is why we also want to protest against the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Everything that is happening to the migrants and workers in this country and the genocide in Gaza was made worse under Biden and Harris.

For this reason, we shouldn't vote in this election but organize for the revolution. A comrade also spoke about 9/11 never ending for workers around the world and how Harris received support from Dick Cheney, one of the main war criminals complicit in killing millions of workers in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Many comrades also chimed in and talked about the liberals' attacks on students and made a case for why the working class will win the revolution. In the end, our friends who came donated and one even joined the Party, another nail in the bosses' coffin.

Filthy-rich DNC full of lies

I spent hours watching the Democratic Convention and am convinced that liberal politicians are the greater evil. They lie constantly and convincingly, especially if we do not know the facts. Here are some examples:

Former CIA director Leon Panetta and other military officials praised the U.S. role in Afghanistan and Iraq, never saying how the wars destroyed the countries, killed millions, and left U.S. soldiers with PTSD and devastating injuries.

UAW President Shawn Fain praised Biden as a friend of labor because he spent two minutes on the UAW picket line. Furthermore, after the union passed a resolution for a ceasefire, Fain endorsed Biden. The administration is now threatening the union for their vote for Gaza.

- Kamala cried crocodile tears describing the conditions in Gaza while calling for support of Israel to defend itself and refusing to stop U.S. aid for Israel.
- Speakers praised Kamala's work as a prosecutor without mentioning she wanted to fine parents whose kids had many school absences.
- Kamala portrayed immigration policy as humane when Biden and Obama deported more people, including Haitians, than Trump.
- Speakers repeatedly praised Kamala as "nice," a great friend and mother, building a cult of personality.
- Speakers and delegates represented many demographics, including "racial" categories, disabilities, generations, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. Strong optics.
- Speakers promised to lift the middle class, no mention of the working class and poor people.
- There were some references to COVID and Biden's programs that provided a stimulus program and free tests, vaccines, masks, and medications. There was no mention that these protections are not free now; two tests often cost $20 and the drug Paxlovid is $140!

The Convention mirrored the qualities of a musical Broadway show. Fashion, makeup, hair, speaking, gestures, energy, pacing – all professionally choreographed and scripted to the last detail. A positive? John Legend and Stevie Wonder selling out for the Democrats. And sadly, the crowd of 20,000 responded with chants of USA, USA and patriotic signs. The cameras never captured any signs of dissent from the noncommitted delegates or the thousands who protested genocide in the streets of Chicago. It was a lovefest for U.S. capitalism and its corporate sponsors who are setting us up for more wars and economic austerity. Shades of Germany in the 1930s?

Glossary

Capitalists compete by any means necessary. Much like smaller criminal gangs, different groups of capitalists battle one another to secure territory, resources, and exploitable labor–the basis of their profits.They have created the state as a mechanism to manage and protect this ruthless profit-driven system. Through laws, police, prisons, elections, the military, schools, the media, and other institutions, the bosses have built a dictatorship to keep themselves in power—and keep the working class out of power.

Fascism is a stage of late capitalism in crisis where the liberal democratic veil peels away to reveal a rotting dictatorship. The bosses use state terror to discipline their own class and enforce compliance by the working class–both essential conditions for waging global war. Fascism is marked by more direct and centralized rule, with intensified racism, sexism, and nationalism.

The Big Fascists are the dominant finance capitalists, principally the multinational banks and oil companies (JPMorganChase, ExxonMobil). They're trying to build a multiracial, patriotic coalition to back U.S. imperialism and protect their far-flung profits. This is the wing that plays the drums of World War III.

The **Small Fascists** are mostly domestically oriented capitalists, spearheaded by the Koch, Mercer, DeVos, and Coors families, along with Richard Mellon Scaife, Harry and Lynde Bradley, John Olin, Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and a cast of other billionaires. They want to cut taxes for short-term profits and are reluctant to invest in costly ground wars to defend the global U.S. empire. Their agenda includes a racist gutting of social services at home and a retreat from U.S. imperialist alliances, including NATO.

Elections won't stop fascism and war

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bosses urgently need more centralized, fascist control to keep their racist "Jewish state" afloat.

With the world's capitalists both deeply divided and more dangerous than ever, workers must take the class struggle into our own hands. In our reform work, we must make election issues out of the struggle against atrocities in Gaza and the fight against police murders. We must declare our solidarity with migrating workers everywhere. Most of all, we must use these struggles to build Progressive Labor Party and a mass movement to fight for communist revolution—the only lasting solution.

U.S. bosses can't afford liberal democracy

Liberal democracy has always been a cover for the rulers' dictatorship. When the ruling class is relatively united, as it was in the U.S. for more than a century after the Civil War, elections gave workers the illusion of choice. Meanwhile, the big bosses backed both sides—heads they won, tails we lost. But over the last thirty years, U.S. imperialism has steadily lost ground to China, now the world's leading industrial power. With global war on the horizon and their empire at risk, the U.S. bosses' splits have grown much sharper.

Today we have two vicious factions of racist murderers competing for power in the U.S. The Small Fascists, fronted by Trump, are focused on their profits in the U.S. and have no appetite for more taxes. The Big Fascists, who control the Democratic Party, are backed by the multinational banks and oil companies; they need a massive military to help them dominate world markets and call the shots on trade. Both sides are viciously anti-working class. Both use racism to divide us. And both will stop at nothing—including nuclear war--to keep their side on top.

In this fast-deteriorating situation, liberal democracy is a luxury the bosses—including the finance capital bosses—may soon be unable to afford. They can't allow the working class to decide which faction will consolidate control, or where and when the U.S. is going to war. The stakes are too high. The electoral system simply does not work for the bosses when they're in a crisis of this magnitude.

Don't vote—revolt!

The working class is facing a critical choice, but it's not between Democrats and Republicans. It's between the bosses' blueprint for war and fascism and our fight for liberation through communist revolution. The working class can't be liberated by elections because our power lies outside the electoral system. We give up that power when we fall into the trap of choosing one rising fascist or another. In this case, we know them by what they've already done. We've witnessed Trump's embrace of open nazis. We've seen Top Cop Harris eagerly help fill the jails with Black workers while protecting crooked prosecutors. We should have no illusions that she'd be any better as president than Biden or Trump.

When do workers win? When we march in the streets. When we fight back against racism. When we unite against whichever mass murderer winds up in the White House. It's in the class struggle where we are strongest and the bosses are weakest.

So far, the most significant moments of this election campaign have come when small groups of protestors bravely stood up to Harris in Detroit and Las Vegas to demand that she end her complicity with genocide. The victory is in the fight. When the working class fights back, it gains the confidence to smash the bosses and their nightmare system. When the working class fights back, it opens the door to building a movement to ditch the rotten profit system once and for all--with communist revolution.



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Protesters becoming subject to counter-terrorism investigations

The Intercept, 9/13–The protest did not go off as planned. In February 2023, government recruiters came to the student union at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, stacking National Security Agency-branded plastic cups and splaying out pamphlets about Navy fringe benefits... Everything about the protest had been relatively routine, right down to the arrests, but the local and federal authorities saw something more sinister...the local sheriff's office in Oakland County, Michigan, documented the incident in a case report as a hate crime against law enforcement. The FBI recorded the incident as part of a terrorism investigation...

Over the following months...the FBI's counterterrorism investigation unlocked additional federal resources, deepened coordination with military intelligence, generated sustained counterterrorism attention on minor acts of vandalism, and ultimately culminated in a six-person boots-on-the-ground operation conducting physical surveillance of the Stop Camp Grayling Week of Action.

Chip trade war between U.S. and China accelerates

NikkeiAsia, 8/31–An analysis of China's current semiconductor technology revealed that the country is approaching a level three years behind industry leader Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC), showing the limitations of U.S. efforts to stem Beijing's development of cutting-edge chips.... (China's) SMIC, which is subject to U.S. measures to suppress advanced chip technology, is capable of producing 7-nanometer chips. TSMC supplied 5-nm processors to Huawei for the 2021 phone. Generally, the smaller the nanometer size, the higher the performance and the smaller the chip...The two chips have similar areas and performance levels...TSMC also faces growing hurdles to stay ahead of Chinese rivals technologically as miniaturizing circuits become increasingly difficult.

"The U.S. regulations so far have only slightly delayed Chinese innovation, while sparking efforts by the Chinese chip industry to boost domestic production,"... TSMC also faces growing hurdles to stay ahead of Chinese rivals technologically as miniaturizing circuits become increasingly difficult. "The U.S. regulations so far have only slightly delayed Chinese innovation, while sparking efforts by the Chinese chip industry to boost domestic production," ...

India's intelligence agency active in U.S. against Sikh independence activists

The Guardian, 8/22–A Sikh separatist leader was attacked on a California highway earlier this month in a shooting that his organization has described as an assassination attempt. Satinder Pal Singh Raju, an organizer with Sikhs for Justice and an advocate for the establishment of an independent Sikh state, Khalistan, was traveling on the Interstate 505 near Sacramento on 11 August when the truck he was in was "sprayed with bullets." He survived the shooting.

Raju is an associate of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian advocate for Khalistan who was assassinated in Vancouver in 2023, according to Sikhs for Justice. The Canadian government has said there were "credible allegations" that "agents of the Indian government" were behind Nijjar's death. California has long been home to a strong Sikh independence movement, and Raju has helped organize referendum efforts in the state to show support for Khalistan.

Over 600 Palestinians in West Bank killed in the last year

Al Jazeera, 8/16–Palestinians in the occupied West Bank are reeling after Israeli settlers ravaged a village overnight, killing a 23-year-old man and injuring several others in the latest incident of deadly violence against Palestinians in the area. Dozens of masked Israeli settlers descended on the village, opening fire on residents, setting cars ablaze and destroying homes and other property, according to witnesses and video footage from the assault. The attack came amid a surge in Israeli military and settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, which has unfolded in the shadow of Israel's war on the Gaza Strip. Nearly 600 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces and settlers in the West Bank between the start of the Gaza war...A spokesperson for the US National Security Council said that "attacks by violent settlers against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank are unacceptable and must stop."

ELECTIONS WON'T STOP FASCISM AND WAR

Violence has no place in America.

—Kamala Harris, after the latest attempt to assassinate Donald Trump.

"I believe in…ensuring we have the most lethal fighting force in the world."

—Kamala Harris five days earlier, in her debate with Trump.

A funny thing happened on September 10, when tens of millions of workers watched a spectacle of shameless evasions, racist fabrications, and bald-faced lies. At the TV debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, the "lesser evil" never showed up.

On one side, the gutter racist Trump promised mass deportations and gibbered his despicable blood libel about workers from Haiti eating household pets in Ohio. On the other, Harris mourned a failed bill that would have unleashed an additional 1,500 Gestapo agents at the U.S. border with Mexico—"to help those folks who are working there right now…to do their job." And she repeated her pledge that she "will always give Israel the ability to defend itself, in particular as it relates to Iran and any threat that Iran and its proxies pose to Israel."

In short, Harris doubled down on U.S. policies to criminalize desperate migrating workers and to underwrite the Israeli rulers' genocide in Gaza and the West Bank. As Israel's President Benjamin Netanyahu keeps carpet-bombing schools and defenseless tent camps, the debate was a reminder that Harris follows in the footsteps of Genocide Joe Biden, Deporter-in-Chief Barack Obama, and mass incarcerator Bill KKKlinton. And that regardless of which side wins in November, it will not stem the rise of fascism in the U.S. or the growing momentum toward World War III. The billionaire bosses who back Harris will ultimately need the discipline of fascism as much as those who back Trump, and Harris has assured them that she's ready and willing to do whatever it takes. She is the safer choice for finance capital—the Big Fascists, the main wing of U.S. imperialism—in part because she'll keep funding two bloodbaths in their interests: the Ukraine bosses' brutal clash with Russian imperialism, and the Zionist rulers' savage onslaught against workers and children in Palestine.

As rival Chinese and Russian bosses flex their muscles from the South China Sea to Europe, the election is exposing the weakness of the U.S. ruling class—and the hard fact that workers are under attack from both sides. The crisis of capitalism is straining the limits of the bosses' liberal democracy and the capacity of elections to sort out their differences with a "peaceful" transfer of power. Less than four years after inciting an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, Trump has made it clear that he won't accept a loss this time around —and that he'll jail any donors, "operatives," "illegal voters," lawyers, or election officials who try to "cheat" (Washington Post, 9/8). While the Democrats and their finance capital masters are more tied to liberal democracy, a valuable tool to mislead and pacify the working class, they're planting their own seeds for a possible election challenge. They're using their big media bullhorns for tales of Russian interference (New York Times, 9/4), of Trump loyalist "infiltration" of swing state election boards (Rollingstone.com, 8/14), and of Republican efforts to throw hundreds of thousands of potential Democratic voters off the rolls (NYT, 9/15).

In Israel, meanwhile, liberal democracy is struggling to sustain the apartheid oppression of workers in Palestine. Although Netanyahu and his Likud cronies narrowly lost their move to strip Israel's judges of much of their power, they may not be done trying. The Israeli

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WRITE FOR CHALLENGE!

CHALLENGE strives to be the communist paper for and by the international working class. We call on all readers, supporters, and comrades to submit class struggle articles, analytical pieces, original photos and graphics, letters, and political cartoons.

The next deadline is night of Friday,September 27

Send to desafio.challenge@gmail.com. For some guidance and house style rules, please go to www.bit.ly/338ZJow

All submissions are open to collective discussion, struggle, and change. See sidebar on page 2 about fighting for collectivity and against a cult of the individual.